

# **A Working Session on Communities, Institutions, and Policies:**

## **Moving from Environmental Research to Results**

**September 16-17, 1997**

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A Women in Development Technical Assistance Project

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# **A Working Session on Communities, Institutions, and Policies: Moving from Environmental Research to Results**

by

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## PREFACE

From September 16 to 17, 1997, staff from the U.S. Agency for International Development's Global, Regional, and Program and Policy Coordination Bureaus interested in gender and the environment met in Bethesda, Maryland, with USAID partners and friends. The goals of the meeting were to define best practices in considering the gender aspects of environmental issues, and to identify future opportunities and steps to enhance environmental management at USAID. This report summarizes the presentations, activities, and outcomes of the working session. See Annex I for Meeting Agenda and Annex II for Participant List.

The meeting focused on the lessons learned in community participation, gender, and environment from the work of the Managing Ecosystems and Resources with a Gender Emphasis (MERGE) Project and the Ecology, Community Organization and Gender (ECOGEN) Project. Both projects are funded partially by USAID.

This meeting was planned and facilitated by WIDTECH staff in collaboration with staff from Women in Development Support and Resources (WIDSR, DevTech Systems Inc.). Both WIDTECH and WIDSR are part of the USAID Office of Women in Development (G/WID). This meeting on gender and the environment contributes to the G/WID mandate to provide technical assistance and training to USAID bureaus and missions. All meeting-related costs were met by the WIDTECH project.

We would particularly like to thank those people from G/WID, the University of Florida, Clark University, and Iowa State University who helped plan and implement this meeting, especially Muneera Salem-Murdock, Joan Harrigan Farrelly, Lisette Staal, Marianne Schmink, Barbara Thomas-Slayter, and Cornelia Butler Flora. We also want to thank our international participants, Rachel Polestico, Constance Campbell, Marcia Cota, Betty Wamalwa Muragori, and Rosario Lanao. We are grateful to the participants for their time, efforts, and creative ideas. We also extend a special thanks to Cecilia Bazan, Ingrid Arno, and Jennifer Green from WIDTECH for providing administrative support and invaluable rapporteur services.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On September 16 and 17, 1997, environment and gender staff from the Global, Regional, and Program and Policy Coordination Bureaus of the U.S. Agency for International Development met in Bethesda, Maryland, with USAID partners and friends. The goals of the meeting were to define best practices in considering the gender aspects of environmental issues, and to identify future opportunities and steps to enhance environmental management at USAID. The meeting was interactive and guided by facilitators. Participants worked in small groups to relate presentations to their own experience and everyday work. This report summarizes the presentations, activities, and outcomes of the working session.

The working session focused on the lessons learned in community participation, gender, and environment from the work of the MERGE (Managing Ecosystems and Resources with a Gender Emphasis) and ECOGEN (Ecology, Community Organization and Gender) projects. MERGE is a multiorganization partnership that includes the University of Florida and works primarily in Latin America. ECOGEN, based at Clark University, has also involved staff at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. It has worked in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Both projects are funded partially by USAID.

Participants from a mix of offices, institutions, and backgrounds attended the working session. One-third of the participants are USAID environmental staff and two-thirds of the participants are gender specialists. Of the latter group, half were supported by G/WID and the other half were from the MERGE and ECOGEN teams. Of the 10 advisors who work under G/WID auspices, 4 focus primarily on environmental issues, 2 work on economic growth and agriculture, and the remaining 4 cover multiple sectors.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER ISSUES AT USAID**

Work on gender, environment, and development was presented in a conceptual framework based on the democratic principles that undergird the work of USAID. Democracy represents a commitment to representation, participation, and equity. However, although community participation is increasingly accepted as the preferred mode of project planning, such participation does not necessarily include women. Explicit attention to gender analysis identifying the relations between men and women, and women's roles, rights, and responsibilities is necessary. Within this framework, gender becomes a critical variable in assessing the fulfillment of these democratic principles, as well as the effectiveness of environmental projects.

The presenters stressed the importance of addressing gender concerns to ensure that environmental resources are managed sustainably. Gender information enables environmental professionals to more fully understand how resources are being used. The most effective way to address the gender aspects of environmental problems is to involve both women and men in communities in all aspects of managing resources, do careful gender analysis of the problem to be addressed, and create equitable access to decision making by both women and men so that they can determine how to allocate and manage resources in a manner that addresses the needs of the whole community. Gender concerns are far more apparent at the household and local level, but can be recognized within institutional structures, and gender-related information must inform policy at all levels of society.



## LESSONS LEARNED FROM MERGE AND ECOGEN

The lessons learned from the case studies and the experience of MERGE and ECOGEN serve as useful guides for USAID environmental work, particularly in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. MERGE relies on four sets of analysis: scale and context; stakeholders and power; gender analysis; and participation, empowerment, and institutional change.<sup>1</sup> These analyses provide useful information for the development of project designs, and for project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and training. ECOGEN work points to the importance of gender-disaggregated data; organization, participation, and negotiating skills; education and training; livelihood security; macropolicies; and local-to-global linkages and partnerships.

The lessons learned by MERGE and ECOGEN include a similar mix of methodological approaches, themes, and philosophies. MERGE and ECOGEN both value gender analysis in their work. They obtain gender-disaggregated data and also capture dynamic relationships between women and men. In both projects these analyses are undertaken with and by community members. Philosophically, both are committed to empowering disadvantaged groups through improved skills, education, and training. MERGE and ECOGEN have recognized that their local work must be complemented by work that transforms or creates responsive institutions and policies that address the needs and interests of the whole community. MERGE and ECOGEN also recognize the importance of including livelihood security issues, for women and men, in their environmental work. Both groups work through extensive partnerships locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Both groups focus on rural areas, but vary somewhat in their emphasis on natural resource management, biodiversity conservation activities, and smallholder agriculture. MERGE works specifically with stakeholder analysis to identify interests of women and men and other groups; MERGE has also looked at spatial issues beyond just the local level.<sup>2</sup>

MERGE and ECOGEN have also done work on monitoring and evaluation, which has relevance for “reengineering” activities at USAID. The ECOGEN work with indicators for gender, equity, and effective resource management in Africa provides one starting point in building such measurements. Project staff have identified three types of indicators related to gender and environment: impact indicators such as productivity, welfare, and equity; process indicators such as capacity building, organizational skills, leadership, and partnerships; and sustainability indicators such as replicability, local ownership, cost-effectiveness, and environmental suitability. In Brazil, MERGE has worked with incorporating gender aspects into index indicators for institutional capacity building and for development of alternative production systems.

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF RESEARCH TO PROGRAM AND POLICY

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<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of these four sets of analyses, see Annex VI.

<sup>2</sup> Stakeholder analysis involves identifying the different social actors who can affect, or be affected by, the resource management issues at hand; spatial issues include recognizing that the space people occupy may be defined by gender.

Group discussion indicated that research on the gender dimensions of the environment and natural resource management is not always reaching its intended audience within USAID. There is a tension between researchers wanting to represent the complexity of reality in lengthy papers and the need of development program managers for brief nuggets of digestible information. Although researchers often do an admirable job of describing and analyzing complex situations, they are at times unable to answer the “so what” questions to the satisfaction of a policy and program audience. Tension also exists between time and money — good research, capacity building, and meaningful participation take time, but USAID needs to show short-term results to secure its funding as an agency.

### **Identifying the Starting Point: Different World Views**

The world views of gender specialists — usually social scientists — and environmental specialists from social, natural, and multidisciplinary backgrounds can often differ. Gender specialists may draw from a variety of conceptual frameworks that cross disciplines. Much of the data is qualitative; it is not always possible to reliably predict environmental and social outcomes from gender actions; and models tend to be descriptive rather than predictive. Environmental staff often have training in more formal ecosystem or economic modeling. It is not always easy for environmental staff to see how gender work “hangs together.” Gender specialists and social scientists frequently start their analysis with people and social organizations; environmental people typically begin by asking “What is the environmental issue in this situation?”

USAID environmental staff initiate environmental projects because of environmental problems. Particularly for natural resource management and biodiversity conservation activities, the environment is the starting point, not gender. Many of USAID’s environmental activities reflect an appreciation of the importance of community participation and stakeholder analysis. However, not all of them reflect an understanding of the importance of gender to community participation. In addition, project managers do not always see how to incorporate gender considerations into project activities, particularly in policy-related activities. Thus there is a role for trained gender/environment experts in USAID’s environment work to support USAID field and Washington activities and to interpret and develop research information in a useable form for USAID program staff.

### **Ongoing Work in Gender and Environment Activities by Working Session Participants**

The working session participants are involved in an impressive and wide variety of activities related to gender issues: human and institutional capacity building; day-to-day integration activities within USAID (such as scopes of work, R4 documents, information dissemination, and field technical assistance); and gender and environment research and analysis related to field activities (such as identifying “gendered” resource management for watersheds, coastal areas, and protected areas).<sup>3</sup>

### **New Opportunities for Gender-Related Environmental Work at USAID**

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<sup>3</sup> It would be difficult to assess from information gathered at the workshop what gender and environment activities are being done by particular USAID environmental staff, because the information was collected on anonymous cards and individual participants could list multiple activities.

For USAID environmental work, it may be more helpful to take a community approach rather than focusing immediately on households or individuals. There is opportunity to capture gender-related information through customer surveys and stakeholder analyses, since environmental staff are generally already open to these two modes of social assessment. However, stakeholder analysis in its traditional form is not a substitute for gender analysis. Stakeholder analysis would need to include more social and gender analysis and capture people's multiplicity of roles, relationships, and positions over time.

To aid their work on facilitating rather than directing participatory processes, environmental staff and partners may benefit from gender-related assistance. Work from MERGE and ECOGEN suggests that in participatory environmental activities, the role of technical experts becomes one in which technical people help communities define and prioritize their own problems, identify options, and understand the implications of choices.

There is opportunity to integrate gender issues into indicators, particularly institutional index indicators and those dealing with participatory processes, as in Brazil under the Environment Program. Although USAID reengineering is intended to encourage iterative learning, there are also pressures to report using big numbers. Therefore, quantification of gender-related results is important. Other documents or processes, such as Environmental Impact Assessments, provide an opportunity for highlighting gender issues. Gender-related indicators help measure progress toward goals for participatory programs and also social, attitude, and behavior changes that affect the environment.

The participants outlined some strategies for engaging the USAID environment sector staff and their partners to improve and increase the integration of gender in their work. Opportunities for action include:

- Provision of incentives and technical support for USAID personnel and partners to ensure that their programs are participatory and address gender concerns where appropriate.
- Development of case studies to document lessons learned from projects and programs where gender analysis and gender-sensitive participatory research are used successfully.
- Development of strategies to take advantage of USAID policy and the political will that supports gender analysis and participation.
- Identification and follow-up work with those USAID staff and partners supportive of gender concerns, including the possibility of G/WID training for some G/ENV or other agency environmental or agricultural staff, who would then serve as a cadre of in-house experts to provide both virtual and field assistance to SO teams based in the Missions. Because of time constraints, gender and environment training per se is not a high priority for most Washington-based environmental staff. However, there is interest in shorter, focused, hands-on workshops in which staff work on a product or issue related to their day-to-day activities and obtain feedback from gender experts on their work.
- Creation of a gender and environment team to include staff from G/WID, G/ENV, and other interested staff to coordinate efforts on gender and the environment.
- Communication of the results of this workshop to USAID partners and staff and maintenance of the alliance established during the meeting.

- Development of strategies to capitalize on USAID institutional support via reengineering for customer surveys, stakeholder analysis, gender analysis, and participation.
- Further collaboration among G/ENV, the G/WID environment specialists, and the USAID Participatory Development Forum.

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## **REPORT ON THE WORKING SESSION**

### **DAY ONE**

#### **Session I: Introduction**

During the introductory session, the participants and the facilitators discussed their expectations for the meeting. Many of the participants saw it as an opportunity to clarify where they are now and where they should go with issues related to gender, the environment, and natural resource management. Within this framework, participant expectations included defining best practices, providing insights for strategic thinking, identifying resources and resource people, and identifying opportunities and future activities. The facilitators hoped that the format of the meeting would serve as one model in redefining gender training from an often didactic system to a more collaborative mode of networking and sharing of lessons learned within a structured framework.

The participants, working in small groups, discussed how they used gender in their work with natural resource management and environmental services. The three significant categories that emerged were:

- Building human and institutional capacity. This category included briefings of senior staff, training of trainers, networking, and collaboration with USAID partner organizations;
- Integrating gender issues and information into documents and activities. Examples included mainstreaming gender into project scopes of work and USAID R4s; disseminating materials and information; and providing technical assistance, outreach, and research; and
- Substantively linking gender and the environment. Examples of how these linkages are made included identifying women's resource use and management skills, and using that information

in project plans and activities; considering the gender aspects of environmental issues in protected areas, watershed management, coastal resource management, and community-based natural resource management.

## **Session II: Fundamental Concepts**

The session on concepts introduced issues central to the consideration of the gender dimensions of environmental activities. The facilitators presented the following concept sets for participant discussion:

### **Concept Set One: Considering Gender at Three Levels of Analysis**

- **Policy.** What policies have an impact on how natural resources are used and conserved at the local level by men and by women? What access and control do local communities have over natural resources? What is the philosophy (policy) of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with regard to community participation, gender, and diversity?
- **Institution.** What is the structure of the institutions that are meant to support and serve communities? Are women in management positions? Do employees have training in community participation and gender? When institutions are mostly male, what strategies are in place for reaching women?
- **Community.** Is the community a central part of environmental projects and programs? Are women involved in all aspects? If not, why not?

### **Concept Set Two: Three Cornerstones of Gender Analysis**

- **Gender relations.** Within the social unit of analysis (household, community, institution, or farming system), gender relations may determine the access to and control over resources. For example, who has access to the trees and their products and who controls the trees and their harvest?
- **Gender roles, rights, and responsibilities.** Often the roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men differ. What is the division of labor between the sexes (for example, do men plant, women weed, men harvest, women preserve)? What rights do men have that women do not have? For example, a livestock project may target women but on the death of a husband the cows go to the male relatives, not to the widow. What is the division of responsibilities? In Brazil, women have the primary responsibility for processing nuts and men for tapping rubber trees.
- **Sociospatial dynamics.** Gender differences are often found in mobility, displacement, migration, and the spatial location of human activity. For example, public spaces and formal meetings may be dominated primarily by males whereas women control land close to the household for kitchen gardens and small animal husbandry. Women's mobility may be more limited than for men.

### Concept Set Three: An Integrated Approach for Gender

- Gender and issues of concern to women are often thought of as a separate component of development projects, programs, and activities. Gender issues are sometimes seen as an add-on activity or extra work. However, most development work is implemented within a framework of democratic principles, often through a community-based approach. A simple framework for an integrated approach to gender recognizes that democratic initiatives by definition require representation by the people involved, including women. Full community participation is one way to achieve representation.
- One tool for understanding communities and for encouraging participation is gender analysis. This analysis identifies the relations between men and women; their roles, rights, and responsibilities; and how spatial dynamics differ by gender. Through gender analysis, issues of concern to women emerge. With such an approach, institutions and policies can be made more responsive to the men and women they are meant to serve.

### Concept Set Four: The Three “Es”: Efficiency, Equity, Empowerment

- **Efficiency.** “Misunderstanding of gender differences, leading to inadequate planning and designing of projects results in diminished returns on investment” (USAID/WID Policy, 1982).
- **Equity.** “To give particular attention to those programs, projects, activities which tend to integrate women, thus improving their status” (USA Percy Amendment, 1973).
- **Empowerment.** To become aware of one’s reality and to realize this reality is not a closed world with no exit over which one has no control but rather a limiting situation that can be transformed. To become aware of one’s reality, to reflect on it, and then act to change it (Paulo Freire, 1970).

In summary, “Through attention to gender issues, our development assistance programs will be more equitable, more effective, and ultimately more sustainable” (USAID Gender Plan of Action, 1996).

### Concept Set Five and Group Activity: Disaggregation of Data by Sex

Disaggregation of data by sex is a core concept in gender analysis; it assists the practitioner to identify gender issues for discussion and resolution. The group was presented with an example from Niger. Although the aggregated literacy rate for both males and females is 11 percent, this figure disaggregated by sex shows 28.6 percent of those literate are women and 71.4 percent are men. The group was asked: “Why is there a gap between men and women?” Discussion in small groups yielded numerous explanations related to the socially determined roles, rights, and responsibilities of men and of women. These explanations included the power differential between men and women, the societal devaluation of girls, the opportunity differential between sending a boy to school and a girl, the roles of women and of men and the demand on their time, the limitations that the Niger cultural context may create for schooling of girls compared with boys, and the institutional obstacles for providing education for males and females.

### Session III: Lessons Learned from MERGE

The objective of the MERGE project is to enhance the effectiveness of natural resource management by recognizing the relationship of community participation, gender, and the protection of the environment (see Annex VI).

#### The MERGE Approach

MERGE combines a number of activities:

- Participatory training and research and the use of analytical tools;
- Networking and collaboration among institutions; and
- Participatory community development and empowerment.

#### Key Lessons Learned

On the basis of field activities, four MERGE principles have emerged:

***Level and context.*** *It is important to pay attention to the level at which gender is addressed — from household to policy — and to the geographic, spatial, and cultural context.*

Regional environmental management planning requires a participatory learning process that involves local stakeholders, and is not the purview of a few technical experts or external consultants. These stakeholders identify and negotiate gender and other differences and interests into actions and policies at household, local, and regional levels.

Gender issues need to be strategically and explicitly incorporated in different ways at different levels. Gender is most visible at the household level, less so at the community level, and is usually invisible at regional levels where planning and policy making often take place.

It is important to look at the overall context of the environmental activity, to make gender issues visible in planning at all levels. Practitioners should begin by identifying the environmental concerns within a specific geographic, spatial, and cultural context. They then should define homogeneous zones — based on population, flora, fauna, or other — to determine who is doing what with relation to the environment. Gender becomes critical at this point. In the experience of MERGE, gender must be addressed together with context and community participation in order to fully engage conservation and natural resource management actors.

***Stakeholders and power.*** *It is important to examine the role of stakeholders in a given situation, and to understand power relations, conflict, and alliances, how they change over time, and how this stakeholder information can be used as a dynamic, strategic tool for conservation and development.*

Analysis of different stakeholders as a strategic tool for conservation and development should include a focus on organized and unorganized, formal and informal interests and how they interact in different situations. It should include intracommunity differences, including variables such as



gender, ethnicity, and class, and how these variables interact. A stakeholder analysis is a key to understanding power relations, conflict, and alliances and how they change over time. Understanding how stakeholders interact and change is important in affecting policy, institutions, and field work.

***Gender differences.*** *Gender analysis captures the importance of the relationships between men and women with respect to the environment and the impact of social change on gender roles, rights, and responsibilities.*

Gender analysis can lead to more effective programs within the environment sector. Gender differences across generations and age cohorts provide a way to analyze social change as it intersects with personal life histories. For example, with changes in the global price for rubber, the focus of environmental management on the Acre State in the Brazilian Amazon shifted from rubber tapping, an activity dominated by men, to local processing of Brazil nuts by women and young people. Women now play a central economic role. However, the sociopolitical spaces within institutions such as the rubber tappers union are, for the most part, still closed to most women.

***Collaborative partnerships.*** *It is important to facilitate collaboration, networking, and mutual learning to empower local stakeholders.*

Collaborative learning through institutional partnerships is a powerful tool to empower local stakeholders for future participation. Training in conservation, development concepts and approaches, gender analysis, and participatory methods has led to the institutionalization of collaborative partnerships that focus on gender and environment. The MERGE approach begins with training and human capacity development. The trainers do not come with answers but rather they work on joint learning with partners to develop strategies for better understanding of the relevance of gender to resource management. Learning from the field then leads to collaborative research, workshops, networks, and exchanges between institutions from different field sites (see Annex VII for full lessons learned).

## **Session IV: Lessons Learned from ECOGEN**

The goal of ECOGEN is to enhance the effectiveness of natural resource management by recognizing the relationship of community participation, gender, and the protection of the environment.

### **The ECOGEN Approach**

The ECOGEN approach is to examine social structures and conditions at different levels of analysis. It begins with individuals (stratified by gender, age, and so forth). It then moves outward to households (including family configurations and socioeconomic status); to social institutions (such as legal, political, economic, religious, and cultural institutions); and to the resource base, which includes both environmental and socioeconomic elements (see Annex III).

The approach then fosters activities that empower local people (through training, formal education, organizing, or negotiating); create access to macrolevel institutions and processes (policy changes, new development paradigms, or global action programs); and strengthen linkages and networks (such as linking external opportunities and local initiatives).

### **Key Lessons Learned**

ECOGEN work indicates the following:

- Gender-disaggregated data are critical for planners, managers, and policy makers to take appropriate action;
- Organization, participation, and negotiating skills enable disadvantaged local people and groups to become empowered. Often disadvantaged people do not realize the power of collective action;
- Education and training help groups organize around issues and common concerns. Effective ways to educate and train include learning by doing, learning by solving problems, and learning by reflecting on actions;
- Livelihood security at the local level can be supported by mobilizing local resources for action. This is a first step in achieving more equitable distribution of the resources of the broader society;
- Macropolicies in development need to put people at the center of the development process. Economic growth should be a means and not an end. Policies also need to respect the natural systems upon which all life depends; and
- Local-to-global linkages and partnerships among a broad range of institutions strengthen local groups. These linkages can be coalitions, alliances, and networks. They help to create a more equitable and just future (also see Annex IV for lessons learned).

### **Work on Indicators**

Through support from USAID's Africa Bureau, ECOGEN developed indicators for gender, equity, and effective resource management. These measures help to assess the effects of women's increased involvement in resource management decisions. They also measure progress in achieving improved livelihoods and sustainable environments:<sup>4</sup>

- Impact indicators measure productivity, welfare, and equity. For example, one or two welfare indicators can be selected to reveal changes in individual and community well-being. Their selection will depend on the activities of the environmental project in areas related to environmental health, environmental education, nutrition, housing, and sanitation, for example;
- Process indicators are relevant for activities in capacity building, organizational skill building, leadership training, and partnerships. For example, committed leadership within local communities will be able to mobilize and organize local groups; and
- Sustainability indicators include replicability, local ownership, cost effectiveness, environmental suitability, and so forth. For example, indicators can measure if local people find a project useful, want it to continue, and are prepared to assume responsibility for its continuation. The result is that local ownership has been achieved and local empowerment improved.

## DAY TWO

### Session I: Recap of Emerging Themes from Day One

- **Theme One:** Information and research for USAID must be simplified and succinct;
- **Theme Two:** Community participation is key to USAID policy and also to incorporating gender in environment programs;
- **Theme Three:** Collaborative work and learning among USAID staff, partners, local communities, households, and individuals have resulted in sustainable and effective natural resource management;
- **Theme Four:** The involvement of local people, both men and women, and their communities is critical for conservation efforts;
- **Theme Five:** Environmentalists begin with the environmental problems; social scientists working with environmental activities begin with people and social problems. There is a need to bridge the two perspectives;
- **Theme Six:** Environment is the entry point. Gender is made visible through community participation and analysis of the environment from a social perspective; and

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<sup>4</sup> For further information, see B. Thomas-Slayter and others, "Gender, Equity, and Effective Resource Management in Africa," Clark University: Worcester, Massachusetts, 1994.

- **Theme Seven:** The process to engage USAID staff, partners, and local communities relies on education, training, negotiation skills, gender analysis, stakeholder analysis, other participatory methods for learning about the biophysical and social environment, collaboration, networking, and mutual learning.

## **Session II: ECOGEN Case Studies**

### **Lessons Learned: Mindanao, Philippines**

The Mindanao case study is based on a project of the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM/CRSP), which has been funded by USAID. The site is a watershed in Mindanao and is situated in a fragile area of cloud forest. A lake used to generate electricity was silting up from logging and the increase in horticultural production. There was a need for research on sustainable natural resource management, particularly to reduce soil loss and to engage local institutions in monitoring soil loss and soil recovery.

The successful outcomes included:

- Participation by a pilot municipal group in monitoring of soil, water, and biodiversity, and, based on the experience of this group, extension of water monitoring activities to other municipalities;
- Multidisciplinary work by social scientists, and water and soil scientists;
- Multisectoral involvement among environment and health institutions; and
- Multipartner activities by NGOs, local groups, and state, national, and international agencies.

The project invited young men to monitor the water to determine if the techniques being used for soil conservation were reducing the silting. However, the men were not effective. Women farmers, as well, were brought in to monitor the water without much success. The project then determined that women were more interested in health issues than in soil loss. As women learned about how water quality affects the health of their families, and the program was expanded to include monitoring for e. coli, women became interested and participated. This led to their further engagement in a wider range of environmental activities. Ultimately, the community's involvement led to positive outcomes such as an increase in the adoption of soil conservation technologies by both men and women farmers.

### **Lessons Learned: Lakewood, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines**

In Lakewood, women were concerned about the muddiness and polluted state of their lake at certain times of the year. These conditions were blinding and killing fish and reducing local fish supplies. Also, the women were no longer able to use the lake for washing clothes and general cleaning.

As a result of project activities, the following outcomes were achieved:

- Both local organizations and local government became committed to saving the lake;
- Local practices and programs changed. For example, farmers switched from conventional to sustainable agriculture and local decision makers chose to implement a municipal drinking water project rather than developing a swimming pool for tourists;
- At the local level, there was increased recognition of the uses of the lake and surrounding environment by gender (for example, women's concern focused on the household food supply, income, and cleaning needs, and men's concerns related to fishing; women's use of the forests for food and medicine, and men's interest in logging and farming);
- Local people recognized the importance of the community mobilization of both men and women and the importance of the cooperation of agencies; and
- Indigenous beliefs were successfully incorporated into efforts to save the lake (for example, that the lake is sacred and a gift from the spirits, and the use of taboos on cutting certain plants that filter incoming water to the lake).

### **Lessons Learned: Rift Valley, Kenya**

In the Rift Valley, a once-landless population was resettled around Lake Nakuru. A participatory rural appraisal (PRA) facilitated the development of a local resource management plan. This plan was based on the problems, resources, conflicts, and possibilities of the group. The lessons learned from doing the PRA were:

- The facilitators brought their own gender biases to the PRA and male facilitators did not always listen to the local women's priorities;
- The facilitators had to work intensively with the local women to get the women's ideas on the agenda because, initially, the men's ideas dominated the agenda. For example, women's priorities focused on immediate and smaller-scale issues such as fuel wood supplies and water tanks. Men tended to prioritize infrastructure and larger-scale interests such as roads;
- The PRA revealed that local farmers are disturbed by wildlife damage to their crops and have opinions on poaching by the local population;
- Participants recognized the importance of building the capacity of women to recognize their own interests. For example, women were interested in harvesting water, access to fuel wood, and increased food production. Their capacity in these areas was enhanced and their interests were shared with other groups in other regions. This proved to be a valuable exercise (see Annex V for full case studies).

### **Session III: MERGE Case Study — Brazil**

The collaboration of USAID/Brazil and MERGE is a prime example of the evolution of a program that pays close attention to environmental concerns (such as global climate change, logging, land use, biodiversity, and energy) from a gender perspective.

The success of the collaboration depended upon:

- Leadership from within the USAID/Brazil Mission who worked in collaboration with leadership at the University of Florida and with local NGOs;
- Linkages among local, national, and international communities and agencies;
- Additional outside resources, for example, from the G/WID GENESYS and WIDTECH projects; and
- The training of trainers in techniques for gender analysis and community participation, which succeeded in broadening the base of local people who were capable of carrying out project activities.

The results of the collaboration include:

- Attention to gender institutionalized in two NGOs and the involvement of many other organizations, agencies, and educational institutions in the use of gender analysis in their work;
- Discussion of gender issues at annual USAID program meetings;
- A gender and environment workshop in July 1997 that resulted in the delineation of future steps including a strategic planning exercise, development of case studies, and a bibliography;
- Continued collaboration among a network of MERGE and USAID/Brazil associates; and
- Development of index indicators to measure the progress with gender within USAID/Brazil (see Annex VIII for full case study).

#### **Session IV: Working with Gender Aspects of Project Design Elements**

During this session, USAID staff brought examples of their current work to their small groups and solicited the help of their colleagues in determining how best to include gender. The following is an example of one of the small group discussions.

##### **Egypt Group: Tourism along the Red Sea Coast**

G/ENV provided a description of some proposed USAID activities along the Red Sea in Egypt. The Mission is considering a new Strategic Objective, but for now these activities fit under the Mission's Special Objective for "managing natural and cultural resources." These activities provide an opportunity for greater stakeholder and community involvement. The presenter wanted ideas on how to include gender issues.

The Egyptian Tourist Development Authority is promoting rapid development along the Red Sea. There are now dozens of big hotels and the population is growing. In terms of marine biodiversity, the reef is being destroyed by sewage and from anchoring by the fishing boats, which are now diving boats. USAID has provided mooring buoys. Urban environmental services are completely overwhelmed. There has been some improvement in the quality of Environmental Impact Assessments and more ecofriendly construction methods and hotel management practices for reducing energy and water use.

The local population has grown and changed in composition. Five years ago, the population was limited and numbered 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants. With tourism, the population has grown tremendously from migration, but is not evenly distributed across population centers. Migrants now far outnumber locals. A huge population of single men from Cairo work intermittently in this area and then return to their Cairo-based jobs. Basic services, including primary schools, are not available for them. Three population centers are involved: Hurgada, which is growing very quickly; Sfaga, which is 60 kilometers away and less developed; and Quser, which has an Old City suitable for cultural tourism because it is an embarkation site for *haj* journeys to Saudi Arabia.

Customer surveys have identified local organizations and stakeholders. There are several social service NGOs that are not very active; the environmental NGOs are more active. The latter involve expatriate-owned dive shops and have Egyptian boards of directors. For the communities at large and the tourist industry, there is a great need to look at potable water and solid waste issues. The environmental NGOs are focused on marine biodiversity related to the coral reef and raising local awareness. The USAID customer surveys were also done with hotel managers and owners, small local business owners, and boat captains. Local women have not participated much in these fora but they indicate an interest in economic activities and credit.

In group discussion, the Egyptian situation was compared with the Amazon, where there has been dialogue between the private tourism business owners and community members on who would deliver services and who would benefit. Sometimes, there is an intermediary role for NGOs to play to help local community members derive benefits from tourist enterprises. But these NGOs may not always be environmental NGOs — there is a need to include other types of NGOs.

One way to understand the Egyptian situation would be through creation of spatial zones and through social stratification. Three spatial zones can be identified based on their level of development activities (Hurgada, Sfaga, and Quser). Another spatial division within these three zones would demarcate those who live along the coast and those who live further away. The population of the zones can be further stratified by original residents and migrants, and then by gender.

The group discussed the seasonality of activities and how the daily and seasonal requirements of fishing may fit or conflict with tourist industry jobs, for both men and women. Other social organizations may be important in this area. In Muslim areas like this with a large number of newcomers (migrants), the mosque associations may be very important. There are pros and cons associated with using existing versus new social organizations or groups for development activities. Also, the tourists need to be considered for customer surveys by USAID. The discussion elicited ideas and enthusiasm about the interaction of the social sciences and the environmental sciences and the inclusion of gender in the daily work of USAID.

## **Session V: Recommendations for Future Actions and Opportunities**

During this session, small groups were given the task of discussing future opportunities for ensuring that gender is an integral part of the environmental work of USAID.

### **Group A**

**Concerns:** Strengthen the ability and desire of people in USAID/G/ENV to implement participatory programs while simultaneously addressing gender.

**Constraints:** G/ENV staff have no time to do what they perceive as additional work (such as considering gender). There is little political will to promote the issues related to gender and the environment. They also lack case studies and lessons learned documents that focus on gender and are relevant to G/ENV.

**Solutions:** Provide incentives and technical support for USAID personnel and partners to ensure their programs are participatory and address gender concerns when appropriate.

### **Strategies:**

- Using the technical expertise of G/ENV and G/WID, co-author case studies of participatory G/ENV projects. The G/ENV staff can provide the information and editing. G/WID can provide the research and write the case studies, including interviewing of G/ENV staff. This approach would generate peer recognition for doing participatory work, create more value for participatory programs through the lessons learned, and strengthen the collaboration between G/WID and G/ENV as G/WID promotes and helps document the G/ENV work;
- Promote and foster institutional expectations that USAID work be participatory, for example, by ensuring that G/ENV scopes of work and requests for proposals require that work be participatory. G/WID can support this effort by working collaboratively with G/ENV;
- Consider other kinds of awards and explicit recognition for work on participatory programs. For example, USAID offices or bureaus could publicize work by managers or teams that ensure that their programs are participatory. They could encourage professionals to present the process and the results of participatory programs at conferences. An annual team award for participatory programs could be instituted, associated with a ceremony, and the names of those honored can be published and disseminated at USAID; and
- Identify and remove the constraints that staff face in making their work more participatory (for example, to overcome the need for immediate results, R4s should recognize progress on participation as well as on achieving physical changes in the environment).

### **Group B**

- Quantify, document, and disseminate results of environment projects and programs addressing gender and the environment, thus deepening our understanding through analysis;



- Determine the constraints to considering gender in environment projects and use WIDTECH to pull together methods to overcome them;
- Take advantage of USAID policy and political will on gender and participation and take advantage of the critical mass of USAID staff who already take gender seriously;
- Be cognizant of the material already available on gender and the environment;
- Identify and work with those supportive of gender in USAID Missions;
- Learn from successful case studies and use the lessons learned to argue persuasively for the integration of gender and the environment, thereby creating demand;
- Reward USAID Missions that consider gender and build on these successes;
- Create a G/WID and G/ENV team;
- Work informally to emphasize the importance of gender;
- Communicate the results of this workshop to USAID partners and staff. Maintain the enthusiasm of the alliances created at this workshop; and
- Partner with international NGOs, including USAID partners, who are working with gender and the environment.

### **Group C**

“We know that we are nothing without our partners and grantees.”

“Stakeholder identification provides one good entry point for gender.”

USAID environmental projects should:

- Conduct stakeholder workshops more routinely;
- Provide sensitization on stakeholder analysis;
- Be sure the Missions understand the results of stakeholder analysis;
- Assure that USAID customer surveys pay special attention to stakeholders. Customer surveys can be used by strategic objective teams as a tool to address ethnicity, gender analysis, and other social variables. Teams dealing with customer surveys can think of these surveys as tools to integrate gender and other social issues;
- Take advantage of the positive institutional support for customer surveys, stakeholder analysis, gender analysis, and participation resulting from USAID reengineering; and
- Gain access to the resources required to do stakeholder analysis through, for example, the use of IQC mechanisms and of WIDTECH, G/WID, and other related services for technical support; and of USAID senior management to reallocate resources.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **Reasons to Address Gender Aspects of Environmental Programs**

The presenters stressed the importance of addressing gender concerns to ensure that environmental resources are managed sustainably. For work with environmental colleagues, the emphasis needs to be on the sustainable use of resources, rather than beginning the discussion with gender concerns. Gender information enables environmental professionals to more fully understand the implications of how resources are being used. The most effective way to address the gender aspects of environmental problems appears to be involving women and men in communities in all aspects of managing resources; preparing a gender analysis of the problem to be addressed; and creating equitable access to decision making by both women and men so that they can determine how to allocate and manage resources to benefit the whole community. Although gender concerns are far more apparent at the household and local level and can be recognized within institutional structures, this gender-related information must also inform policy and recognize that men and women may have different needs and constraints.

### **Lessons Learned from MERGE and ECOGEN Approaches**

Lessons learned include a similar mix of methodological approaches, themes, and philosophies. Both MERGE and ECOGEN value gender analysis in their work, because it enables researchers to obtain gender-disaggregated data but also to capture dynamic relationships between women and men. In both projects these analyses are undertaken with and by community members. Philosophically, both are committed to empowering disadvantaged groups through improved skills, education, and training.

Both MERGE and ECOGEN have recognized that their local work must be complemented by work that transforms or creates responsive institutions and policy and that address the needs and interests of women and men. Both MERGE and ECOGEN recognize the importance of including livelihood security issues, for women and men, in their environmental work. Both groups work through extensive partnerships — locally, regionally, nationally, and sometimes internationally. Both groups focus on rural areas but vary somewhat in their emphasis on natural resource management, biodiversity conservation activities, and smallholder agriculture.

MERGE works specifically with stakeholder analysis as a method to identify interests of women and men as well as other relevant groups; MERGE has also looked at spatial issues beyond the local level.

### **Relating Research to Program and Policy**

Based on group discussion, it appears that research on the gender dimensions of ENRM is not always reaching its intended audience within USAID. There is a tension between researchers wanting to represent the complexity of reality in lengthy papers and a development program manager's need for brief and concise presentations of digestible information. Although researchers often do an admirable job of describing and analyzing complex situations, at times they are not able to answer the “so what” questions to the satisfaction of a policy and program audience. Tensions also exist between time and money — good

research, capacity building, and meaningful participation take time, but USAID needs to show short-term results to secure agency funding.

Another problem between research and project staff is different world views. The world view of gender specialists (usually social scientists) and environmental specialists (from social, natural, and multidisciplinary backgrounds) can often differ. Gender specialists may draw from a variety of conceptual frameworks that cross disciplines. Much of the data is qualitative; it is not always possible to reliably predict environmental and social outcomes from gender actions, and models tend to be descriptive rather than predictive. The environmental staff are trained in more formal ecosystem or economic modeling. It is not always easy for the environmental staff to see how gender work “hangs together.” Gender specialists and social scientists start their analysis with people and social organizations; environmental people typically begin by asking, “What is the environmental issue in this situation?”

Given this tension between gender specialists and environmental specialists, there is a significant role for trained gender/environment experts in USAID’s environment work, to support USAID field work and Washington activities and to serve as communicators or translators between researchers and USAID program staff.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The major recommendations to come out of the working session serve as entry points for gender issues in USAID projects and programs involving natural resource management and environmental services:

1. **Entry Point I: Community and Stakeholder Analysis and Customer Surveys.** Increase emphasis on community and stakeholder analyses and customer surveys. Gender issues can be explored through customer surveys and stakeholder and community analyses. USAID environmental staff are open to these modes of social assessment, and this could be a valuable way to collect gender-related data for environmental projects.
2. **Entry Point II: The Role of Technical Experts.** Encourage a different role for technical experts when they deal with participatory processes. Work from MERGE and ECOGEN suggests that the role of technical experts is different when working with participatory development. In a participatory process, technical people help communities define and prioritize problems, identify options, and understand the implications of choices. The communities decide which problems to address and how. In this process, technical people support, rather than make, decisions; they do not choose the problems or the solutions. Technical people require gender-related assistance to make the transition to this new role.
3. **Entry Point III: Indicators.** Integrate gender concerns into indicators. Opportunities exist to integrate gender issues into indicators, particularly institutional index indicators and those dealing with participatory processes, as in Brazil under the USAID Environment Program. Quantification of gender-related results is important. There are also a number of other documents or processes — for example, environmental impact assessments — that provide an opportunity for highlighting gender issues.

We need to include indicators to measure progress toward goals for participatory programs. Participatory processes take more time than directive processes, but are also generally more effective and sustainable. Indicators should reflect the extensive social, attitude, and behavior changes that must occur before biophysical changes can be observed and measured.

4. **Entry Point IV: Working Session Follow-up.** Continue to develop strategies for integrating gender into USAID environmental work. The participants outlined strategies for engaging the USAID environment sector staff and their partners in integrating gender into their work. Opportunities for action include provision of staff incentives to make programs more participatory; providing further G/WID technical support and short, focused, hands-on training and training of trainers; dissemination of case studies of quantified results of activities improved by gender analysis; creation of a permanent gender and environment team; dissemination of the working session findings to other USAID partners and staff; and further collaboration between G/WID contractors and the USAID Participatory Development Forum.